



# An Interactive Discussion on Managing Disability Supports

Leanne Gallant

Kara Reid

Jeff Sparks

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Leanne

# Leanne's Background



- Deaf since birth
- Involved with mainstream society
- Attended SMU, DAL and Eastern College
- Currently Community Support Worker
- Established Deaf and Hard of Hearing Youth Association
- Married for 8 years, with two kids and foster Deaf son
- Received awards - Queen Elizabeth Diamond Medal; National Award 2013 from Council of Canadian with Disabilities; Deaf Youth Role Model from Canadian Association of the Deaf

# Leanne's Supports

- Family and Friends
- Co-workers/Managers
- Organizations
- Interpreters
- Technology (TTY, VRS - phone for the deaf)



# Leanne's Important Skills to Manage Disability Supports



- Positive Attitude (YOU CAN DO IT!)
- Communication is the KEY
- Independence
- Understanding and Flexibility
- Advocacy
- Time Management
- Various Skills from Workshops/Conference

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Kara

# Kara's Background

- Providing my experiences from 2 different angles; as an individual and a health professional
- Diagnosed with diabetes at the age of 14
- Studied at Acadia University and Dalhousie University
- Occupational Therapist
- 17 years experience working with children and their families with EMP and at the Stan Cassidy Centre for Rehabilitation



# Kara's Supports

- Family and friends (Camp)
- Healthcare partners
- Technology
- Medications and supplies
- Letters from physicians for travel
- Emergency kit





# Kara's Supports

## As an OT

- We are one of many health professionals and community partners that can assist in planning and moving towards post-secondary education and training.
- I have helped students apply for funding, grants and scholarships



# Kara's Important Skills to Manage Disability Supports



- Systems navigation
- Advocate **and communicate**
- Directing care
- Technology to assist in becoming more independent
- Money management skills
- Organizational skills

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Jeff

# Jeff's Background

- First person with disability in NB to be fully integrated
- Full time educational assistant
- Bachelor and Master Degrees
- 20 years experience in HR and non profit
- Live independently
- Married for 2 years
- Community leadership
- Quality of life



# Jeff's Supports

- Family and friends
- Community organizations
- Healthcare partners
- Paid caregivers
- Accessible home and van
- Adaptive technology



# Jeff's Important Skills to Manage Disability Supports



- Self advocacy
- Communication
- Flexibility
- Knowing when it's time to be boss
- Human Resources (Hiring, Managing, Health and Safety, Legal)

# Jeff's Important Skills to Manage Disability Supports



- Patience
- Knowing the system or how to navigate it
- Ability to laugh!

Where did you find financial assistance to maintain independence through school and into career?



# Jeff

- Government
  - Attendant Care
  - Technology
- Private Health Insurance
- Muscular Dystrophy Canada
- Scholarships and bursaries
- Employers



# Leanne

- Atlantic Center (SMU) & Atlantic Provinces Special Education Authority
- Scholarships and Bursaries
- Student Loan
- Department of Education (Interpreters)



# Kara

- Personally – health insurance was a huge factor for me. Without insurance my costs are significant every month.
- As an OT I assist many youth in finding and /or writing support letters for funding, scholarships, technology and grants



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How did you build your  
support network?

# Leanne

- Volunteering
- Networking
- Positive attitude



# Kara



- Get out there, meet people and start young!
- Become involved in organizations that support you
- Keep it up as you get older and as life changes

# Jeff

- Early community integration
- Helping others
- Time and patience
- Networking with community organizations
- Volunteer work



Is there a tip, tool or tactic  
that has stood the test of time  
as you manage your disability  
supports?



# Kara



- Learn to talk to people about your medical, learning, communication needs, etc.
- Finding interests while you are young to build on as a future career
- [Myhealthpassport.ca](http://Myhealthpassport.ca)

# Leanne

- 🌈 Advocate for yourself and explain your needs
- 🌈 Don't be afraid, you're not alone



# Jeff



- Knowing how and where to recruit caregivers
- Templates and spreadsheets for job postings and caregiver schedules

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Is there any other advice  
you'd like to share?

# Jeff



## Persistence

You wont get what you need if you don't ask for it

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Kara

# Leanne



<http://www.nessygamesplayer.co.uk/>

“When I hear somebody sigh, “Life is hard”, I'm always tempted to ask, “Compared to what?””

-Sydney Harris